

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 SP-02 USIA-06 AID-05
EB-08 NSC-05 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-07 OMB-01 CEA-01
CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 XMB-02
OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 L-03 H-01 DODE-00 PA-01
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R 231242Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5658
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 05794

USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EEC, XF, PFOR
SUBJ: EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE -- TENTATIVE PREPARATIONS FOR
MAY GENERAL COMMISSION MEETING

REF: 77 BRUSSELS 15396

1. MARCH 22, KLAUS MEYER, DIRECTOR GENERAL IN EC COM-
MISSION'S DIRECTORATE FOR DEVELOPMENT, AND SENIOR-MOST
COMMISSION OFFICIAL WORKING ON EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE, IN-
FORMED MISSION OFFICER THAT PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS TO
ARRANGE NEXT MEETING OF GENERAL COMMISSION OF EURO-ARAB
DIALOGUE ARE NOW UNDERWAY. MEYER RECENTLY MET WITH ARAB
LEAGUE SECRETARY GENERAL RIAD IN CAIRO IN THIS CONNECTION.
ACCORDING TO MEYER, NEXT GENERAL COMMISSION SESSION IS
TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR MAY, POSSIBLY IN CAIRO. RIAD
REPORTEDLY TOLD MEYER THAT FOR COSMETIC POLITICAL REASONS
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IN PRESENT MID-EAST CIRCUMSTANCES THE EGYPTIANS ARE EAGER
TO HAVE THE SESSION IN CAIRO EVEN THOUGH, SINCE SUDAN WILL
STILL HOLD ARAB LEAGUE PRESIDENCY IN MAY AND THUS WILL BE
IN CHAIR FOR ARAB DELEGATION, THE MEETING WOULD NORMALLY
HAVE BEEN HELD IN KHARTOUM. MEYER SAID SUDANESE HAVE
FACILITATED ESTABLISHMENT OF CAIRO VENUE BY INFORMING RIAD
AND EC COMMISSION THAT SUDANESE GOVERNMENT WOULD FIND IT

DIFFICULT TO HOST SUCH A SESSION IN MAY.

2. MEYER SAID RIAD INDICATED THAT HE IS TRYING TO ARRANGE A MEETING IN DAMASCUS IN APRIL OF THE ECONOMIC MINISTERS OF THE FOLLOWING ARAB COUNTRIES TO PREPARE ARAB POSITIONS FOR GENERAL COMMISSION MEETING: SYRIA, EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA, IRAQ, MOROCCO AND ALGERIA. RIAD EMPHASIZED TO MEYER THAT THIS GROUP REPRESENTS A FULL RANGE OF ARAB OPINIONS FROM RADICAL, THROUGH MODERATE, TO CONSERVATIVE.

3. FROM RIAD MEYER GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT AT PRESENT, WITH THE ARAB WORLD SPLIT ON THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE MIDDLE EAST POLITICAL PROBLEM --E.G., THE SADAT PEACE INITIATIVE, THE ROLE OF THE PLO--THE ARABS WILL BE CONTENT IN THE MAY SESSION OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION, TO PLACE THE MAIN EMPHASIS ON ECONOMIC QUESTIONS, WITH RELATIVELY LITTLE ATTENTION GIVEN TO THE POLITICAL SIDE OF THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE. HOWEVER, MEYER CONCURRED WITH MISSION OFFICER'S COMMENT THAT THE LONG-STANDING EXPECTATION OF EC-NINE THAT ARABS WOULD GRADUALLY COME TO AGREE THAT DIALOGUE SHOULD FOCUS ALMOST WHOLLY ON ECONOMIC MATTERS HAS TO DATE BEEN BELIED AT SUCCESSIVE GENERAL COMMISSION SESSIONS, AS THE ARABS HAVE CONSISTENTLY PRESSED FOR A POLITICAL DIMENSION TO THE DIALOGUE. MEYER ALSO AGREED THAT ARABS ARE LIKELY TO WATCH MID-EAST POLITICAL SITUATION EVOLVE UNTIL NEARER THE DATE OF THE MAY GENERAL CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMISSION SESSION BEFORE DECIDING WHETHER AND IN WHAT TONE TO PUSH POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE EC-NINE.

4. IN REPLY TO MISSION OFFICER'S FURTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT AGENDA FOR MAY SESSION, MEYER SAID AGENDA REMAINS TO BE FIXED. DIALOGUE WORKING GROUPS CONTINUE TO MEET, BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO DRAMATIC PROGRESS IN ANY SECTOR SINCE LAST GENERAL COMMISSION MEETING IN BRUSSELS LAST OCTOBER. MEYER THOUGHT THAT, INTER ALIA, MAY SESSION WOULD REVIEW PROGRESS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FEASIBILITY STUDIES AGREED TO AT THE OCTOBER SESSION (77 BRUSSELS 13376).

5. RECALLING THAT STANDARD EC REPLY TO ARAB REQUESTS FOR A MEETING OF EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL HAS BEEN THAT EUROPEANS AGREE IN PRINCIPLE THAT SUCH A MEETING SHOULD BE HELD AT SOME INDETERMINATE TIME IN THE FUTURE WHEN MINISTERS HAVE REAL DIALOGUE PROGRESS TO REVIEW, MEYER SPECULATED THAT SHOULD ARABS IN MAY AGAIN RAISE PROSPECTS FOR MINISTERIAL MEETING, EC MIGHT BE WILLING TO DISCUSS POSSIBILITY OF ARRANGING AN ECONOMIC MINISTERS MEETING, WHILE STILL RESERVING ON QUESTION OF A FOREIGN MINISTERS SESSION. WHILE MEYER DID NOT SAY SO

EXPLICITLY, MISSION OFFICER GOT IMPRESSION THAT EC MEMBER STATES HAVE NOT YET BEEN ASKED TO TAKE A STAND WITHIN THE EC ON WILLINGNESS TO AGREE IN PRINCIPLE TO AN ECONOMIC MINISTERS MEETING WITH THE ARABS.

6. AS NOTED IN SEPTEL RELAYING MEYER'S PLANS TO VISIT WASHINGTON MAY 15-16 (BRUSSELS 5728), MEYER SAID HE WOULD AT THAT TIME BE GLAD TO DISCUSS EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE WITH NEA/RA DIRECTOR PALMER, WHOM HE MET IN BRUSSELS LAST YEAR, AND/OR OTHER DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS, IF DEPARTMENT WISHES.
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